

## Going Green: **Around the house**

### **Save money in the bathroom**

Buy water-efficient showerheads. With low-flow models, a family of four can cut water usage by as much as 280 gallons a month... and yet not feel much difference in water pressure. Two good options are: Kohler's Master Shower Eco ([www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com)) and Niagara Conservation's Earth Massage ([www.niagaraconservation.com](http://www.niagaraconservation.com)).

### **Bring home superhero plants**

Certain greens can help remove indoor air pollutants like formaldehyde and benzene. Don't have the gardening gene? Golden Pothos, English Ivy, and Peace Lilies are all easy-to-grow toxin fighters.

### **Recycle rechargeable electronics**

Cell phones, digital cameras, and camcorders have made these batteries more popular than ever, but in certain states (Florida, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Vermont) it's illegal to throw them away. Wherever you live, you can find a nearby store that will recycle them for you; just go to [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org) and type in your zip code.

### **Adjust fridge and freezer temps**

Refrigerators eat up the most electricity in the household. Maximize efficiency by keeping the fridge at 37°F. and the freezer at 0°F.

### **Lighten up with energy savings**

Consider using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). They cost a bit more than regular bulbs, but you'll lower your electric bill and pay less in the long run. CFLs last up to ten times longer than traditional ones. To save more on lighting, install dimmer switches and use timers, indoors and out.

*(Worried that fluorescents will fill your house with a greenish glow? That's no longer a problem. When we compared a regular bulb with a GE Energy Star Qualified CFL, testers couldn't tell the difference.)*

### **Recycle smart**

From furniture to electronics, one person's trash is another's treasure-so when you want to dispose of an old item, don't make the dump your first stop. Two sites with alternatives: [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org). The Freecycle Network describes itself as "a place to give or receive what you have and don't need or what you need and don't have [to keep] stuff out of landfills." The Earth 911 Web site offers community-specific resources, with a focus on recycling. Check out the home page to find out where you can recycle your computer, your cell phone... even used motor oil.

### **Become a flexitarian**

Swap out one meat dish a week for a veggie plate. Why? Because raising produce is "cheaper," in terms of energy, than raising animals. Log on to [www.vegweb.com](http://www.vegweb.com) to find tasty, meatless recipes.

### **Grill corn in its husk**

Instead of stripping off the green leaves, soak the ear whole, then place it right on the barbecue-no aluminum foil required.

### **Go for the gold- coffee filters, that is**

Spare trees by replacing paper filters in your coffeemaker with reusable (usually gold colored).

## Going Green: In Your Community

### **Protect the earth while you picnic**

At your next outdoor party, ask people to write their names on disposable cups so they'll use only one (to make it easy, put out markers). If you use disposable dinnerware, buy the kind that won't clog landfills or kill trees. To try: EarthShell plates and bowls ([www.earthshellnow.com](http://www.earthshellnow.com)). They're made from corn, potatoes, and limestone... and cost less than 6 cents per plate.

### **Take paint precautions**

Most paint emits VOCs (volatile organic compounds), the same kind of chemicals found in gasoline and nail polish. But manufacturers like Sherwin-Williams ([www.sherwin-williams.com](http://www.sherwin-williams.com)) have developed water-based products that perform well but give off virtually no VOCs. Krylon's ([www.krylon.com](http://www.krylon.com)) H20 paint is the first low-VOC latex spray paint that can be cleaned up with soap and water. Made from 99 percent food-grade ingredients, Anna Sova's Healthy Wall Finish ([www.annasova.com](http://www.annasova.com)) leaves your rooms smelling vaguely like vanilla. To be at least minimally organic, use a water-based latex paint, not an oil-based alkyd paint-and remember, exterior paints should never be used indoors.

### **Raise the roof with recycled materials**

If your old shingles need replacing, consider a Classic Metal Roofing System ([www.classicroof.com](http://www.classicroof.com)). It's made from recycled aluminum cans but resembles traditional shakes or tiles. Thanks to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, installing this type of material can qualify you for a \$500 tax credit.

### **Choose energy-efficient appliances**

Look for the Energy Star label, awarded to fridges, washers, and other products that exceed government efficiency standards by using less water or electricity. For Energy Star appliances that have been tested by GHI, visit [www.goodhousekeeping.com](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com).

### **Put it in park**

Avoid drive-through windows, especially if there are long lines.

### **Compost**

Instead of trashing food scraps, toss them into Gardener's Supply Company Kitchen Compost Crock, a ceramic countertop composter that's perfect for first-timers ([www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)).

### **Break out the bamboo**

This plant is a far more sustainable natural resource than wood because it grows very quickly. Try the stylish bamboo bowls and cutting boards from TimberGrass ([www.lamsonsharp.com](http://www.lamsonsharp.com)).

### **Home office**

Buy a laptop, it uses considerably less power than a desktop computer.

### **Get off junk mail lists**

Register with the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service ([www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org)) and you'll see a significant reduction in mail after three months.

### **Double up on printing**

Configure your printer so that it prints on both sides of the page. You know those extra pages you get when printing out one simple e-mail? Turn them over and put them back in the printer for reuse.

### **Invest the green way**

Environmentally conscious mutual funds are increasingly available through 401(k) plans, especially if employees express interest. To learn more, log on to [www.socialinvest.org](http://www.socialinvest.org); then talk to your benefits administrator.

### **Buy organic for baby**

Hanna Andersson makes her children's clothing-including the romper at left-with 100 percent organic cotton grown without harmful chemicals ([www.hannaandersson.com](http://www.hannaandersson.com)). This garment is also certified to meet the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 requirements, meaning every fabric, button, thread, and zipper is tested for over 100 potentially harmful substances. Another source for organic-cotton baby clothes is Wal-Mart's new George Baby line for sizes up to nine months.

### **Teach kids to be green**

Give your little ones responsibility for your family's recycling and match whatever they make in deposits at the store. They'll learn about money and recycling at the same time.

### **Mow-ercise!**

Today's non-gasoline-powered reel lawn mowers are easier to push than the old models. Their eco-benefit: zero emissions (plus, you're getting great exercise). If you prefer a power mower, consider a quiet, battery-operated model from Black & Decker ([www.blackanddecker.com](http://www.blackanddecker.com)).

### **Warm up to solar energy**

You may not be ready for a totally sun-powered home, but you can get a taste of the technology by using solar-powered lighting in your yard or on your patio. We like Malibu's Solar Floodlight ([www.intermatic.com](http://www.intermatic.com)).

### **Go native**

Plant flowers and shrubs that are well suited to your climate (the staff at your local nursery can help). The benefit: You'll use less fertilizer and pesticides.

## Going Green: **At the supermarket**

### **Be picky about produce**

Download the "Shoppers' Guide to Pesticides in Produce" at [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org). The wallet-size list sorts out the fruits and veggies that tend to be higher in pesticides (like apples and spinach) from produce with a lower count (like bananas and peas).

### **Choose "certified" coffee**

Yuban coffee is Rainforest Alliance Certified (that means it's grown in a way that preserves the ecosystem). A Fair Trade Certified brand is Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. (Both brands are available at many markets.) For more on these certification labels, see the chart.

### **Support local farms**

At [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org), you can plug in your zip code and find suppliers of organic and sustainable meat, poultry, eggs, and more. If you buy locally, you won't have to rely on farms that ship food nationwide, which helps to decrease our dependence on oil and to cut back on gas emissions.

### **Tote your own grocery bag**

Paper or plastic? Neither! If you're shopping for a small load, bring along your own bag like ones from Cath Kidston ([www.cathkidston.com](http://www.cathkidston.com)). Another practical option: the ACME Workhorse Style 1500 ([www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com)), which crunches into a tiny pouch that fits in your purse.

### **Pay attention to packaging**

Every American produces about four and a half pounds of garbage a day! So before you buy something, eyeball the amount of cardboard, plastic, and/or other materials used for the box or wrapping. Wal-Mart is one big retailer that is waking up to the problem: The chain is replacing petroleum-based plastic containers with corn-based packaging for pre-cut fruit, herbs, strawberries, and Brussels sprouts.

## Going Green: **With Your Personal Style**

### **Dress in eco-chic clothing**

Lara Miller's Melissa tunic is 100 percent bamboo, yet it's as soft as silk. ([www.laramiller.net](http://www.laramiller.net)) Linda Loudermilk, an eco-couture designer, uses fabric made from sasawashi (a Japanese leaf), along with bamboo, soya, and other exotic self-sustaining plants ([www.lindaloudermilk.com](http://www.lindaloudermilk.com)).

### **Make up with Mother Nature**

Aveda's ([www.aveda.com](http://www.aveda.com)) All-Sensitive Body Formula moisturizing body oil uses organic jojoba. What's more, most of Aveda's packaging is made from recycled material. A makeup line that's entirely organic: Nvey Eco ([www.econveybeauty.com](http://www.econveybeauty.com)).

### **Get sporty, eco-style**

Patagonia's ([www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com)) PCR fleece vest (\$70) is made from recycled soda bottles.

### **Be clean (and green)**

Pangea Organics soaps ([www.pangeaorganics.com](http://www.pangeaorganics.com)) are made with organic and often Fair Trade Certified ingredients and come scented with oils like lavender and lemongrass. They come in a biodegradable carton that will start disintegrating within 48 hours if you plant it in your garden.

## Going Green: What to Look For

### Five eco labels you can really trust:

■ **USDA Organic** -- *Seen on:* Food products

**What it means:** Food is produced without antibiotics, genetic engineering, or most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

■ **Rainforest Alliance Certified** -- *Seen on:* Coffee, chocolate, bananas

**What it means:** Companies harvesting the food practice soil and water conservation; they also reduce the use of pesticides.

■ **Fair Trade Certified** -- *Seen on:* Coffee, tea, chocolate, fruit, rice, sugar

**What it means:** Food is grown on small farms; farmers receive a fair price.

■ **Certified Humane** -- *Seen on:* Eggs, meat

**What it means:** Animals raised for dairy, meat, and poultry products are treated humanely. Growth hormones are prohibited, and animals are raised on a diet without antibiotics.

■ **Green Seal** -- *Seen on:* Napkins, toilet paper, paper towels

**What it means:** they must meet recycling and bleaching standards.

Adapted from:

50 Easy Ways to Go Green

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<http://lifestyle.msn.com/green/greenarticlegh.aspx?cp-documentid=656438>